

March 8, 1976

SENATOR DeCAMP: Mr. President, members of the Legislature. We've heard from Senator Chambers and the others the nobility of unemployment and what a sacred cow it is. I think we ought to turn back the clock and see how it all came into existence and where it's gone from where it's started. Remember unemployment was based upon the idea that merely because a man or woman was unable, through no fault of his own, to find employment he shouldn't be put out to starve; there should be provided to him enough to live on, to survive until such time as he could find employment. That was the theory it started with. Then it evolved from there to where unemployment benefits were radically increased, and to where the people that would take unemployment or get unemployment became almost anybody who just got tired of working. So the whole theory or the concept of unemployment has completely switched around from where it started. What the Schmit bill does, in effect, is to return it to this original theory that unemployment should not be merely another welfare program which it is now. So the Schmit amendment says look, we have employment available. You can take it and you will earn, through your own efforts, enough to survive on. If you don't want to do that then go out and find unemploy ... go find employment. If you don't want to do that, then you may have to starve. But we give you the opportunity to work and earn a living honestly. We give you the opportunity if, in fact, you can't work and lost a job properly to get some unemployment. We eliminate the welfare concept of unemployment through this bill. I think it would be a start that other states would follow. I think it would turn unemployment back to what it started as, an emergency program to provide assistance to those that honestly could not find work, but who were ready, willing and able to work.

PRESIDENT: Senator Keyes.

SENATOR KEYES: Senator Schmit, I'd like to ask you two questions. When this becomes a reality... I'm going to support your amendment to put it on. I would have liked to have the \$5 million in the kitty, but \$2 million will do 2/5th of what \$5 million will do. When these people, young students - kids, get out of school next year, 16, 18 years of age, and they go out to look for a job and they can't find a job is this going to be open to them?

SENATOR SCHMIT: Senator Keyes, I believe they have to be employed at one time in order to have qualified for unemployment benefits. So I believe that under the concept of employment law at the present time they would not be eligible for this kind of program. That does not mean they could not work in that area if they chose to do so.

SENATOR KEYES: OK. Now the other one is that when you are going to get, and I presume this will be \$2.30 an hour pay - that's the general, minimum wage, the federal wage, when we get \$2.30 an hour what about the hundreds and hundreds of people across this state that are working for \$2.00 an hour, \$2.10 an hour in drug stores, in grocery stores, etc. and they decide 'Well now it's kind of foolish for me to keep working here and stacking the shelves and doing the odds and ends jobs in this place. I'll just quit and I'll be eligible for a \$2.30 an hour public service job. Probably the public service job will be a lot easier'.